

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ARA-10 ISO-00 IO-13 NSCE-00 USIE-00
INRE-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00
PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 /083 W
-----089860 131459Z /43

O R 131433Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8528
INFO ALL EC CAPITALS
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY LISBON
USNMR SHAPE
USMISSION USNATO
USCINCEUR
DIA WASHDC
USMISSION USUN
AMEMBASSY DAKAR
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
USMISSION USBERLIN
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE
AMCONSUL BORDEAUX
AMCONSUL LYON
AMCONSUL MARSEILLE
AMCONSUL NICE
AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, FR
SUBJECT ELECTIONS 1978: FIRST ROUND RESULTS

SUMMARY. ACCORDING TO "DEFINITIVE" MINISTRY OF INTERIOR FIGURES THE CENTER-RIGHT RECEIVED 48.4 PERCENT, THE LEFT 49.5 PERCENT WITH THE ECOLOGISTS ACCOUNTING FOR THE REMAINING 2.1 PERCENT. THE PS, MRG AND PC STILL HAVE TO REACH AN AGREEMENT FOR MUTUAL SUPPORT ON THE SECOND ROUND BUT HAVE AGREED TO MEET AT 1800 MARCH 13. RPR LEADER CHIRAC HAS CALLED FOR A MEETING OF THE CENTER-RIGHT COALITION LEADERS TO PREPARE THEIR STRATEGY FOR THE FINAL ROUND. AT THE BEGINNING OF FINAL WEEK, THE RACE REMAINS WIDE OPEN, BUT THE LEFT'S CHANCES FOR VICTORY ARE APPRECIABLY LESS THAN THEY APPEARED LAST WEEK. END SUMMARY.

1. A NARROW MARGIN: ACCORDING TO THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR, THE FINAL PERCENTAGES OF THE POPULAR VOTE ON THE FIRST ROUND ARE AS FOLLOWS:

	CENTER RIGHT		LEFT
RPR	22.6	PC	20.5
UDF	21.5	PS	22.5
PRESIDENTIAL MAJ.	2.4	MRG	2.1
DIVERSE MAJORITY	1.0	EXTREME LEFT	3.3
DIVERSE RIGHT	0.9	DIVERSE LEFT	1.1

TOTAL 48.4

ECOLOGISTS 2.1 PERCENT

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2. THE BIG SURPRISE WAS THE PS VOTE, WHICH DID NOT ATTAIN THE PERCENTAGE PROJECTED IN THE POLLS. WHILE THE PS DID PROGRESS THREE PERCENTAGE POINTS FROM 1973, MARGINAL LEFTIST PARTIES ("EXTREME LEFT" FOR EXAMPLE) DID BETTER THAN EXPECTED AS DID THE UDF. MITTERRAND MAY OBTAIN APPROXIMATELY THE 7 MILLION VOTES HE DESIRED, BUT NO MORE

3. THE LEFT: THE LEFT RECEIVED NEARLY 50 PERCENT OF THE VOTE, TO WHICH CAN BE ADDED A PORTION OF THE 2.1 PERCENT ECOLOGY VOTE FOR THE SECOND ROUND. WHILE IT DID NOT RECEIVE THE LEVEL ANTICIPATED BY SOME OBSERVERS, IT SURPASSED THE GOVERNING COALITION IN THE POPULAR VOTE. THE INTERNAL LEFT SITUATION, HOWEVER, REMAINS UNCHANGED POLITICALLY. COMMUNIST LEADER MARCHAIS CONTINUES TO DEMAND AN ACCORD ON THE "OBJECTIVES AND MEANS" OF THE COMMON PROGRAM (PARIS 8522) AND ON THE POST-ELECTORAL GOVERNMENT -- NO "DISCRIMINATION" AS TO MINISTRIES, NUMBER OF MINISTERS TO BE BASED ON FIRST-ROUND RESULTS, EQUAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES. THE PS, PCF AND MRG HAVE AGREED TO A MEETING AT PS HEADQUARTERS AT 1800 MARCH

13. THE PCF'S DECISION ON DESISTEMENT IS STILL OSTENSIBLY DEPENDENT ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THIS "POLITICAL" ACCORD AND IT NOW APPEARS IN A STRONGER NEGOTIATING POSITION THAN ANTICIPATED FOR TWO REASONS: (A) THE PERCENTAGE SPREAD BETWEEN THE PS/MRG AND THE PCF IS ONLY ABOUT 4 PERCENT (2 PERCENT BETWEEN PCF AND PS), AND (B) THERE WILL BE A RELATIVELY LARGER NUMBER OF PCF CANDIDATES IN THE SECOND ROUND THAN HAD BEEN EXPECTED. THUS THE PCF CONTINUES TO HOLD THE KEY TO THE LEFT'S HOPES FOR SUCCESS. BUT THE PCF'S STRENGTH MAY MAKE SUCH AN ACCORD

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DIFFCULT TO FIND, GIVEN ITS INSISTENCE ON A PROGRAM WHICH THUS FAR HAS BEEN UNPALATABLE TO ITS PARTNERS. IF THE LEFT CAN SIGN AN ACCORD WHICH PROVIDES A FACADE OF UNITY WHILE PRESERVING THE INTEGRITY OF BOTH SIDES, THE LEFT PRESERVES ITS CHANCES OF WINNING.

4. THE CENTER-RIGHT: DOING BETTER THAN EXPECTED, IT STILL HAS A MAJOR BATTLE TO FIGHT IF IT IS TO WIN. THIS WILL TAKE THE FORM MAINLY OF COORDINATING ITS ACTIVITIES THIS WEEK TO ENSURE EXCELLENT DISCIPLINE IN THE SECOND ROUND. THE RPR IS THE LARGEST SINGLE PARTY IN THE MAJORITY, BUT THE UDF GROUP HAS A ROUGH BALANCE. MOST OF THE YOUNG LEADERSHIP OF THE GISCARDIAN/CENTRISTS WON THEIR PRIMARIES AND ARE IN GOOD POSITION TO BE ELECTED. PRESIDENT GISCARD'S SPEECH AT VERDUN-SUR-LE-DOUBS AND HIS BRIEF (10 MINUTES) SPEECH THE NIGHT BEFORE THE ELECTIONS REITERATING THE SAME THEMES (THE NEED FOR FRANCE TO HAVE A COHERENT GOVERNMENT WITH AN AGREED PROGRAM AND THE NEED FOR THE VOTER TO WEIGH HIS RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE FUTURE OF FRANCE) PROBABLY HAD SOME EFFECT. PRIME MINISTER BARRE WAS ELECTED ON THE FIRST ROUND AT LYON. CHIRAC HAS CALLED FOR THE LEADERS OF THE CENTER-RIGHT COALITION TO MEET MONDAY TO PREPARE A JOINT STATEMENT AND PREPARE THE CAMPAIGN FOR THE LAST WEEK. HE IS LIKELY TO MOVE FOR A SHIFT IN ELECTORAL APPEAL TOWARD AN INCREASED EMPHASIS ON ECONOMIC EXPANSION, BUT MAJORITY UNITY IS EXPECTED TO BE REENFORCED PENDING THE FINAL ROUND. THE MAJORITY WILL ALSO ATTEMPT TO GUARD ANY SENSE OF OVER-CONFIDENCE ON THE PART OF ITS VOTERS. THEY REALIZE THE LEFT COULD REACH AN ACCORD FOR ELECTORAL

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UNITY AND A POTENTIAL CENTER-RIGHT VICTORY CAN BY NO MEANS BE TAKEN FOR GRANTED.

5. GENERAL COMMENTS:

- THE VOTING RATE WAS 83 PERCENT, A RECORD FOR LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS. WHILE THE ELECTORATE WAS CLEARLY FATIGUED BY THE LONG CAMPAIGN, THEY TURNED OUT IN RECORD NUMBERS.
- THE LEFT CLEARLY GAINED COMPARED TO 1973 WHEN IT WON 45.6 PERCENT OF THE VOTE BUT FELL BELOW WHAT IT SHOWED IN RECENT POLLS.
- THE PCF DID NOT REACH THE 21-25 PERCENT SET BY MARCHAIS, BUT IT DID KEEP THE MARGIN BETWEEN ITSELF AND THE PS MUCH CLOSER THAN EXPECTED.
- THE GREATER THAN EXPECTED NUMBER OF PCF CANDIDATES REMAINING ON THE SECOND ROUND SHOULD WORK TO THE ADVANTAGE OF THE CENTER-RIGHT AS THE PS AND MODERATE SUPPORTERS WILL BE LESS LIKELY TO VOTE COMMUNIST ON THE SECOND ROUND.

- ALL OF THE MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNMENT COMPETING EITHER WON (12) OR REMAIN IN COMPETITION FOR THE SECOND TOUR.
- WHILE THE CENTER-RIGHT DID BETTER THAN EXPECTED AND THE LEFT DID WORSE, THE LEFT IS STILL AHEAD IN POPULAR VOTES BUT WOULD NEED A HIGH DEGREE OF UNITY TO TRANSLATE THIS LEAD INTO A MAJORITY OF ASSEMBLY SEATS.

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